

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00

SP-02 IGA-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-03 DHA-02 /046 W

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R 221244Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1182

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LILONGWE 1361

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PDEV, RH, MI

SUBJECT: CALL BY SANU/SITHOLE GROUP

REF: STATE 145570 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY WAS VISITED AGAIN BY A DELEGATION FROM ZANU/SITHOLE, INCLUDING THIS TIME MR. NOEL G. MUKONO WHO WAS INTRODUCED AS "SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS". HE HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED TO RETURN TO RHODESIA AND WILL BE BASED IN BLANTYRE. TWO MEMBERS OF THE GROUP HAD JUST RETURNED FROM ACCOMPANYING REV. SITHOLE ON HIS VARIOUS CAMPAIGN TRIPS AROUND RHODESIA. THEY INDICATED THERE HAD BEEN A GOOD TURN OUT AT HIS MEETINGS AND SAID SEVERAL KEY SUPPORTERS OF BISHOP MUZOREWA HAVE LEFT HIM TO THROW IN THEIR LOT WITH SITHOLE. ONCE AGAIN THE GROUP MADE A PITCH FOR US FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND STRESSED THEIR INABILITY UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY SEE AS A US-UK COMMITMENT TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AS THE ONLY SOLUTION. THE US POSITION, THAT WE HAVE NO FAVORITE AND ARE NOT SUPPORTING ANY OF THE NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS, WAS MADE CLEAR TO THEM. END SUMMARY.

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2. LED BY ZANU "SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS", NOEL G. MUKONO, ZANU/SITHOLE DELEGATION OF THREE CALLED ON ME AUGUST 19 TO: (A) INFORM USG OF SITHOLE'S CURRENT PROGRESS IN RHODESIA, AND (B) REQUEST ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL, UPKEEP AND SUPPORT FOR ZANU OFFICE ABROAD. IN ADDITION TO MUKONO, PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED H.A.J. MAWERE, A BUSINESSMAN

IN MALAWI WHO ACTS AS ZANU/SITHOLE REP HERE, AND WILFRED PASIPANODYA, ZANU/SITHOLE REP IN ZAMBIA.

3. MUKONO SAID MAWERE AND PASIPANODYA HAD JUST RETURNED FROM RHODESIA WHERE THEY HAD ACCOMPANIED REV. SITHOLE WHEN HE ARRIVED THERE JULY 10. SITHOLE AND HIS ASSOCIATES ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PRESS HAS NOT ACCURATELY PORTRAYED THE FEELINGS OF MOST ZIMBABWEANS WHO ARE "CONFUSED BY EXTERIOR FORCES " (THE FRONT LINE STATES). HE SAID THAT SITHOLE IS SUPPORTING THE ANGLO-AMERICAN EFFORT AND WANTS IT TO SUCCEED BUT THEY SEE A TREND OF EVENTS PERSISTENTLY INDICATING TO THEM THAT THE UK AND THE US ARE THINKING ONLY IN TERMS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. MUKONO ALLEGED WE ARE NOT TAKING THE VIEWS OF ALL ZIMBABWEANS INTO CONSIDERATION; THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WAS FORMED OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE AND HAS NO BASE IN ZIMBABWE. HE DESCRIBED IT AS DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT WILL STIMULATE INTERNAL DIVISIONS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO LEAD TO CIVIL WAR. MUKONO SAID SITHOLE IS TRYING TO RECONCILE ALL GROUPS IN ZIMBABWE.

4. MAWERE THEN FOLLOWED WITH DESCRIPTION, ACCOMPANIED BY PHOTOS, OF SITHOLE'S APPEARANCES IN RHODESIA OVER THREE WEEK PERIOD WHICH PURPORTED TO DEMONSTRATE CONSIDERABLE AND GROWING SUPPORT FOR SITHOLE. HE ALSO PRODUCED NUMEROUS NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS REPORTING SEVERAL MUZOREWA SUPPORTERS HAD RESIGNED FROM THE ANC AND ARE EXPECTED NOW TO JOIN

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ZANU/SITHOLE. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, MAWERE SAID HE EXPECTS DR. GABELLAH WILL SOON DO THE SAME. (ACCORDING TO A BRITISH OFFICIAL SOURCE, MUKONO WAS A MUZOREWA SUPPORTER UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO). MAWERE ALSO SAID THAT MUZOREWA PEOPLE HAD ATTEMPTED TO HARASS SITHOLE GATHERINGS BUT WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. AT SEVERAL OF THE MEETINGS, HE SAID THAT KNOWN MEMBERS OF THE INFILTRATED LIBERATION FORCES WERE PRESENT AND INDICATED THEIR ACCORD WITH THE LINE WHICH SITHOLE IS TAKING.

5. I ASKED MUKONO IF SITHOLE HAD DISCUSSED THE SITUATION WITH IAN SMITH, BUT HE AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER ONLY ADMITTING "THERE HAVE BEEN CONTACTS". HE SAID THAT SITHOLE OPPOSES THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS BUT IS ANXIOUS TO RECONCILE ALL DISPARATE GROUPS INCLUDING WHITE, COLOURED, AND ASIANS, ALL OF WHOM WERE REPORTED TO HAVE HAD MEETINGS WITH SITHOLE. (NOTE: MUKONO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN SITHOLE'S RETURN TO RHODESIA APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE DID NOT RECEIVE THE NECESSARY RHODESIAN CLEARANCE. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN A POLITICAL REFUGEE FOR 14 YEARS. A BRITISH OFFICIAL SOURCE TOLD US MUKONO HAD LED ONE OF THE EARLIEST GUERRILLA EFFORTS AIMED AT OVERTHROWING THE SMITH REGIME BACK IN 1968-69).

6. DUE TO THE HEAVY DEMANDS
ON HIS TIME IN ZIMBABWE, HAD BEEN UNABLE TO MEET WITH
SECRETARY VANCE AND OWEN IN LONDON, BUT WOULD STILL LIKE
VERY MUCH TO MEET THEM IN AFRICA OR ELSEWHERE. HE SAID
SITHOLE WAS APPRECIATIVE FOR HAVING HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO
TALK WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG IN ACCRA. REPEATEDLY DURING
HIS PRESENTATION MUKONO REMARKED THAT THE US AND THE UK COULD
HELP THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE BY SHOWING GREATER UNDER-
STANDING AND SYMPATHY FOR THEIR VIEWS AND NOT FOR THOSE
IMPOSED BY OUTSIDERS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LILONGWE 1361

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7. MUKONO CLOSED HIS PRESENTATION BY STATING THAT SITHOLE
FOLLOWERS URGENTLY NEED THE MEANS TO OBTAIN THE TRANSPORTATION
TO KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM OF HIS INTERNAL CAMPAIGN
AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR OFFICE ABROAD. HE SAID THEIR GROUP
FINDS IT NECESSARY TO CORRECT THE IMPRESSIONS PEOPLE
HAVE ABOUT THE PATRICION FRONT. IN CLOSING HE REFERRED
TO ANGOLA WHERE, HE SAID, ASSISTANCE TO THE MODERATE
FORCES HAD COME TOO LATE. MUKONO WILL BE BASED IN
BLANTYRE FROM NOW ON. THE MALAWI GOVERNMENT HAS JUST PRO-
VIDED HIM A HOUSE FROM WHICH TO OPERATE. HE PLANS TO
TRAVEL EXTENSIVELY AND WILL BE HEADED FOR LUSAKA IN FEW
DAYS.

8. FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTTEL, I STRESSED
THAT US IS NOT SUPPORTING ANY ONE OF THE NATIONALIST
GROUPS AND IS STRIVING, TOGETHER WITH THE BRITISH, TO

BRING ABOUT A SITUATION IN WHICH ALL GROUPS CAN PARTICIPATE
IN "A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS TO DETERMINE THE MAKEUP OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE". I EMPHASIZED THAT
IF THESE EFFORTS SUCCEEDED, IT WOULD SEEM THE REV. SITHOLE
SHOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION, SINCE HE IS NOW IN THE
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COUNTRY WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANIZE HIS SUPPORTERS.
I SAID THAT WHILE WE DO NOT CONTRIBUTE SUPPORT TO ANY
OF THE NATIONALIST GROUPS, WE HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN TRYING
TO HELP ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEES FROM ALL GROUPS. I ASKED HIM
HOW MANY SUCH REFUGEES FROM ZANU/SITHOLE ARE IN MALAWI
WHO ARE EX-STUDENTS WHO SHOULD BE IN SCHOOL (HE SAID ABOUT
200) AND I DESCRIBED OUR SUPPORT FOR THE UNHCR EFFORT TO
PROVIDE OR FIND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE PEOPLE.
MR. PASIPANODYA SAID HE IS A MEMBER OF THE ZANU/SITHOLE
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE AND WILL SEND US A LIST OF REFUGEE
STUDENTS IN MALAWI, GIVING THEIR INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL SITUATION.
I TOLD THEM I HAD SPOKEN WITH PRESIDENT BANDA ABOUT TRYING
TO FIND SOME PLACES FOR THESE STUDENTS AT BUNDA, THE
POLYTECHNIC AND CHANCELLOR UNIVERSITY.

9. ALTHOUGH CLEARLY NOT SATISFIED WITH THE US POSITION,
THE THREE MEN TOOK THEIR LEAVE IN A CORDIAL MANNER AND
RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO MY INVITATION TO EXCHANGE VIEWS
WITH US MORE OFTEN.

10. COMMENT: I MUST SAY THAT THE NEUTRAL POSITION
DESCRIBED REFTEL REMINDS ME SOMEWHAT OF THAT FINE
IMPARTIALITY OF WHICH JOHN L. LEWIS ONCE COMPLAINED TO
PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT. FROM WHERE I SIT, THERE HAS BEEN
NOTHING IN THE STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS OF MESSRS MUGABE OR
NKOMO WHICH WOULD INDICATE THEY ARE THE LEAST INTERESTED
IN A DEMOCRATIC RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION AS TO WHO WILL FORM
THE BLACK MAJORITY GOVERNMENT IN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. WHAT
I HAVE HEAR FROM MALAWIANS (A NUMBER OF WHOM HAVE LIVED AND/
OR BEEN EDUCATED IN RHODESIA) AND FROM PRESIDENT BANDA, WHO
FOR ALL HIS EGO MANIA HAS A SHREWD UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN
NATIONALIST POLITICS, AND FROM WHITES WHO KNOW THE COUNTRY,
IS THAT NEITHER MUGABE NOR NKOMO COULD MUSTER THE INTERNAL
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SUPPORT TO WIN OUT IN A FREE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND THEY KNOW
IT. HENCE THE ADAMANCY THAT THE PRESENT ARMED FORCES OF
ZIMBABWE MUST BE ABOLISHED AND REPLACED BY THE FORCES OF
THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. HOW ZANU/MUGABE AND ZAPU WOULD SORT

THIS OUT, IT SEEMS TO ME, COULD CONCEIVABLY BRING ABOUT THE FIRST INTERNAL CIVIL STRIFE. HOWEVER THAT MIGHT WORK OUT, WITH EITHER OR BOTH IN CONTROL OF POLICE POWERS AND WITH THE FACILITIES FOR INTIMIDATION AND FORCE THIS WOULD BRING, I DOUBT THAT THE REV. SITHOLE OR BISHOP MUZOREWA WOULD STAND A CHANCE DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE. I AM REMINDED THAT TONGOGARA, PRESENTLY ONE OF THE TOP LEADERS OF THE LIBERATION FORCES, WAS CLEARLY IMPLICATED IN THE MURDER OF THE ZANU MODERATE CHITEPO AND OTHERS. IN THE ABOVE DISCUSSION, MUKONO SAID HIS OWN NAME HAD BEEN ON THE SAME LIST WITH THAT OF CHITEPO. WHEREAS A GOVERNMENT DOMINATED BY THE BISHOP AND/OR THE REV. WOULD BE FRIENDLY TO THE U.S. AND THE WEST, EVERYTHING I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD SUGGESTS THAT A PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT UNDER THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP WOULD BE MARXIST AND, IF NOT OVERTLY HOSTILE, AT THE LEAST UNSYMPATHETIC TO US INTERESTS. STEVENSON

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